

Introduction

Plan Intent and Policy Framework

Transportation plays an important role in our every day life. How we address the issues of mobility, accessibility, safety, land use, economic development, and environmental protection will affect our quality of life for years to come. Current federal transportation legislation (the Transportation Efficiency Act of the 21st Century or TEA-21 as it is commonly referred to) requires that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) develop a comprehensive Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that meets existing and future transportation needs.

The LRTP must be more than a list of possible transportation projects. The LRTP must address issues ranging from new roads, freight and other major facilities to bicycle and pedestrian issues; from financing the transportation infrastructure to public involvement; from short to long term strategies and actions; and from the environment to the efficient use of the network. It must be regional in scope and address anticipated transportation needs through at least the next 20 years.



With this framework, the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) in its LRTP provides an extensive review of existing conditions in its jurisdiction and identifies future needs, sets goals and objectives for the future, documents its public involvement process, and addresses policy issues related to the environment, equity in transportation, land use, and project funding. It is the intent of WAMPO to make the LRTP a comprehensive, publicly accepted document that addresses anticipated needs.

Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO)

In 1974, the State of Kansas organized and authorized the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Wichita-Sedgwick County Area. In March 2005, the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation, the City of Wichita, and Sedgwick County in cooperation with Butler County, the City of Andover, Sumner County, and the City of Mulvane, agreed to expand the MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary and agreed that the multi-county metropolitan planning organization will now be named the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO).

The WAMPO entered into agreements with Federal, State, and other local units of government to carry out transportation planning as required by law. The Policy Body includes representatives from the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County, one representative from Wichita Transit, two elected officials selected by the Sedgwick County Association of Cities, one representative from Butler County/City of Andover, and one representative from Sumner County/City of Mulvane. The Kansas Department of Transportation provides one ex-officio representative to the Policy Body. The Policy Body is supported by the Technical Advisory Committee.

The staff services of the WAMPO are performed by the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD), whose mission is to provide professional planning expertise to the community regarding land use, community facility, and transportation needs so that the metropolitan area continues to be a quality place to live, work, and play. The Transportation Planning Division of the MAPD is responsible for the planning activities for all modes of surface transportation within the metropolitan planning area. The division coordinates local, state, and federal transportation agencies in preparing the long-range LRTP and short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The division secures and programs federal and state funds, monitors roadway congestion, and performs traffic impact and corridor studies. Other responsibilities include planning for pedestrian-bicycle facilities, assisting the transit and paratransit service providers, providing opportunities for public input into the transportation planning process, and providing technical assistance to staff and the governing bodies of all jurisdictions within the planning area.

WAMPO website: <http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Planning>

Partners in the Planning Process

Wichita Transit (WT) is responsible for meeting the needs and priorities of the citizens of Wichita with courteous, affordable, reliable and economical public transportation services and amenities, while striving to continuously improve technological and organizational performance. WT works in cooperation with the WAMPO to provide public transportation opportunities to citizens.

WT website: <http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Transit/>



The Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, maintaining, and operating the state highway system. The Bureau of Transportation Planning's Urban Planning Unit works jointly with the larger metropolitan and urban areas such WAMPO to develop short-range and long range transportation plans in accordance with the Federal "3-C" (cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing) transportation planning process. KDOT website: <http://www.ksdot.org>



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides financial and technical support to states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations for constructing, improving, and preserving America's system of highway and major roads. FHWA website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>



The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial assistance and is responsible for ensuring that public transportation providers follow Federal mandates along with statutory and administrative requirements through administrative and technical support. FTA website: <http://www.fta.dot.gov>



Planning Area

The LRTP addresses transportation issues within WAMPO's planning area. The planning area boundary is shown as a dark blue line on the map in Figure i -1. The area that is forecasted to become urban during the next 20 years is shaded blue. Following the 2000 Census, the metropolitan planning area has been expanded beyond Sedgwick County to include the City of Andover in Butler County and the Sumner County portion of the City of Mulvane.

WAMPO Planning Area Boundary

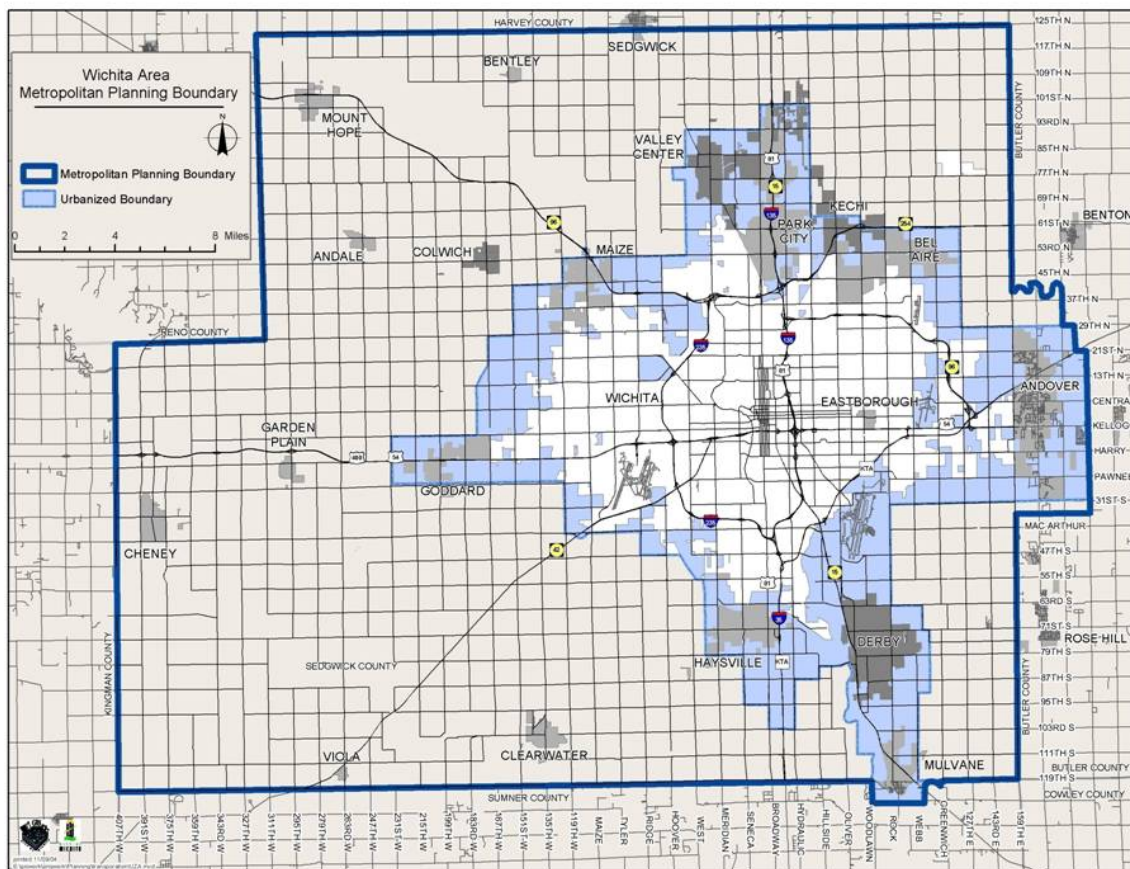
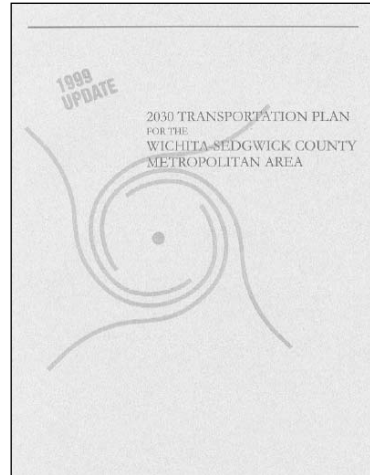


Figure i.1: Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary

Overview - Previous Long Range Transportation Plan

The previous 2030 Transportation Plan was an element of the overall Wichita- Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan, 1999 Update. The goal for transportation was to: **“Maintain a transportation system that provides a diverse set of convenient opportunities for travel to local, regional, and national destinations.”** The Plan contained six major Objectives and 28 Strategies to address the Transportation Goal.



The plan identified a number of issues and proposed improvements for the roadway system including:

- Preserving the right-of-way corridor for the “Northwest Bypass” that will allow the eventual construction of a freeway from US-54 to K-96.
- Need for a “Southeast Area Transportation Study” similar to the Northwest Wichita Major Investment Study to assess the mobility needs of the southeast quadrant of the region.
- Construct new bridges on the Wichita-Valley Center Floodway at 13th Street and 25th Street. Also, widen the Central Avenue Bridge to six lanes and improve both the I-235 and Kellogg and the I-235 and Central interchanges.
- Ten separate railroad-street grade separations.
- Over 250 miles of arterial street widening projects.
- Access management strategies were applied to a number of rural corridors to protect their traffic-carrying capacity.

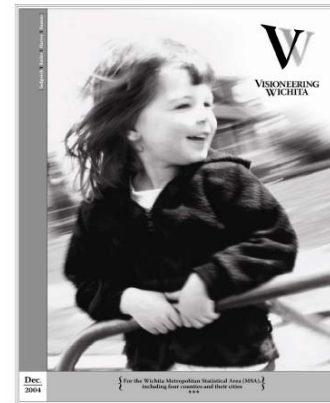
The Plan also identified several measures to improve public transportation:

- Restructure the radial-pulse system to the central (base) area of Wichita.
- Create seven connector/circulator routes to serve the fringe areas.
- Establish Park-and-Ride locations to serve as express service pick up locations to downtown and other employment centers. These would also allow opportunities for small city and rural area transit services to connect to the Wichita Transit system.
- Implement a cross-town shuttle that would provide more direct service to each end of the central area and allow more effective cross-town connection between some of the connector/circulator routes.
- Implement a downtown shuttle that would connect downtown destinations with the Transit Center.

“Visioneering Wichita”

In the *Visioneering Wichita* study, a task force of over 400 people examined the issues and trends affecting the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that includes Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, and Sumner Counties, as well as their communities. This vision incorporates the ideas of more than 8,650 residents representing all of the communities and counties in the MSA region. They selected the following issues for *Visioneering Wichita* to understand and address:

1. Regional Growth and Development
2. Retaining Young People
3. Job Growth
4. Income Growth
5. Education
6. Family Stability
7. Downtown Development
8. Arts/Recreation
9. Racial Diversity, Opportunity, and Harmony
10. Leadership



The “Long-Term Vision” includes having “...**adequate infrastructure to support downtown, urban and suburban neighborhoods that will enhance the quality of life and promote economic development.**”

A “Mid-Term Vision” for the MSA developed strategies that addressed:

- Economic Development
- Education
- Quality of Life
- Government
- **Infrastructure**
- Private Sector Leadership

The strategies for Transportation from *Visioneering Wichita* are:

1. Develop and implement a long range plan for highways that connect the Wichita MSA internally and externally to the rest of the United States.
2. Build a new airport terminal and increase the competitiveness of the Wichita Airport in ticket cost and number of flights.
3. Develop a viable public transportation system.
4. Optimize air, rail, water, and highway passenger and freight capacities to create a multi-modal logistics hub.
5. Enhance transportation opportunities for the poor and disabled.
6. Develop and implement a road and railroad conflict resolution plan.
7. Encourage large signs with street names and street addresses on buildings so they are legible from the street.

Other Regional Plans

A number of other regional plans were reviewed and considered in developing the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, including:

- The Regional Intelligent Transportation System Architecture
- The Parks and Open Spaces Plan
- Comprehensive Plans for the metropolitan communities
- Transportation Plans for the metropolitan communities
- The Airport Master Plan
- Kansas Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan

L RTP Process

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) process is guided by federal regulations that establish a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. The Wichita Area 2030 LRTP addresses all transportation modes as well as the safety and security of the region's transportation system. The LRTP has been developed through an extensive public involvement process. Appendix A contains a full description of the public involvement activities conducted as part of the process.

Although travel in the region is dominated by the automobile, other modes of transportation such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation are important to many citizens in the region. Aviation/airport access, rail transportation, freight movement, and intermodal transportation issues are also included in the planning process.

The LRTP will:

1. Identify the transportation facilities that should function as the metropolitan area transportation system.
2. Include a financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted LRTP can be implemented.
3. Ensure the preservation and make the most efficient use of the existing metropolitan transportation system.
4. Indicate appropriate transportation enhancements.

Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was established by the WAMPO to help guide the planning process and provide input and feedback during the course of the LRTP development. The Advisory Committee was chaired by a Policy Body member and included members from cities, counties, transportation agencies, public transportation providers, and special interest groups.

Major Steps in the LRTP Process

1. **Public/Stakeholder Involvement:** Public and stakeholder involvement are important components of the planning process. The process was designed to ensure that a reasonable opportunity for input and comment was provided to citizens, public agencies, transportation agencies, freight transportation providers, public transportation users, and other interested parties. Opportunities for involvement included three rounds of public meetings, over 40 stakeholder interviews, comment forms, Advisory Committee meetings, and a project website.

2. **Review Data/Information:** The goals and objectives of the previous LRTP were reviewed as a starting point for the update. In addition, a number of local and regional plans have transportation components that were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

3. **Identify Issues, Goals, and Objectives:** Regional transportation issues, goals and objectives were identified through discussions with stakeholders, the public, the LRTP Advisory Committee, and the WAMPO Policy Body.

4. **Plan Development:** The Plan Development included an analysis of the issues identified for the various modes of transportation, the development of regional goals and objectives, and preparation of the recommended LRTP.

5. **Public Review of Recommended Plan:** A 3-week period was provided for the public to review the recommended LRTP. Opportunities for comment on the Plan were provided during public meetings held at various sites in the planning area, at meetings with the WAMPO Policy Body, and throughout the planning process via comment forms on the project website.

6. **Finalize Plan:** Based upon the comments received during the public review period, the final LRTP was prepared for adoption by the WAMPO.

Major Steps in the LRTP Process	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
1. Public/Stakeholder Involvement							
2. Review Data/Information							
3. Identify Issues, Goals, Objectives							
4. Plan Development							
5. Public Review of the Recommended Plan							
6. Finalize Plan							
Wichita Area MPO Adopts New Plan							